AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A negative electrode material for non-aqueous electrolyte secondary batteries, comprising: a carbon material having a sphericity of at least 0.8, and exhibiting an average (002) interlayer spacing d_{002} of 0.365 - 0.400 nm, a crystallite size in a c-axis direction $Lc_{(002)}$ of 1.0 - 3.0 nm, as measured by X-ray diffractometry, a hydrogen-to-carbon atomic ratio (H/C) of at most 0.1 as measured by elementary analysis, and an average particle size Dv_{50} (μm) of 1 - 20 μm; wherein the carbon material further exhibits a specific surface area S (m^2/g) giving a product S × Dv_{50} of 3 – 40 and the negative electrode material has a ratio D_4/D_1 of at most 3.0 between a weight-average particle size D_4 and a length average particle size D_1.

2. (Original) A negative electrode material according to claim 1, comprising a carbonization product of a vinyl resin.

3. (Previously Presented) A negative electrode material according to claim 1, having a bulk specific gravity of at least 0.40 and below 0.60.

4. – 5. (Cancelled).

6. (Previously Presented) A negative electrode material according to claim 1, exhibiting an exothermic peak temperature of at least 600°C.

7. (Previously Presented) A negative electrode material according to claim 1, comprising a surface of the carbon material coated with 0.1 - 10 wt.% of a silicon compound.

8. (Previously Presented) A negative electrode material according to claim 1, containing 0.5 - 5 wt.% of nitrogen.

9. (Previously Presented) A process for producing a negative electrode material for non-aqueous electrolyte secondary batteries according to claim 1, comprising: oxidizing a spherical vinyl resin obtained through suspension polymerization to oxidation at a temperature of 150 - 400°C in an oxidizing gas atmosphere to provide a carbon precursor and carbonizing the carbon precursor in an inert gas atmosphere.

10. (Previously Presented) A negative electrode for non-aqueous electrolyte secondary batteries, having a layer of active substance comprising a negative electrode material according to claim 1 and formed at a coating rate of at most 60 g/m^2.

11. (Original) A non-aqueous electrolyte secondary battery having a negative electrode according to claim 10.

12. (Currently Amended) A negative electrode material for non-aqueous electrolyte secondary batteries, comprising: a carbon material having a sphericity of at least 0.8, and exhibiting an average (002) interlayer spacing d_{002} of 0.365 - 0.400 nm, a crystallite size in a c-axis direction $Lc_{(002)}$ of 1.0 - 3.0 nm, as measured by X-ray diffractometry, a hydrogen-to-carbon atomic ratio (H/C) of at most 0.1 as measured by elementary analysis, and an average particle size Dv_{50} of 1 - 20 μm; wherein the carbon material is a carbonization product of a vinyl resin and the negative electrode material has a ratio D_4/D_1 of at most 3.0 between a weight-average particle size D_4 and a length average particle size D_1.

13. (Currently Amended) A negative electrode material for non-aqueous electrolyte secondary batteries, comprising: a carbon material having a sphericity of at least 0.8, and exhibiting an average (002) interlayer spacing d_{002} of 0.365 - 0.400 nm, a crystallite size in a c-axis direction $Lc_{(002)}$ of 1.0 - 3.0 nm, as measured by X-ray diffractometry, a hydrogen-to-carbon atomic ratio (H/C) of at most 0.1 as measured by elementary analysis, and an average particle size Dv_{50} of 1 - 20 μm; wherein the carbon material further exhibits a nitrogen content of 0.5 - 5 wt.% and the negative electrode material has a ratio D_4/D_1 of at most 3.0 between a weight-average particle size D_4 and a length average particle size D_1.